Mr. *Gordon's*

THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.

DISCOURSE

THANKSGIVING

M. COMYNS

DISCOURSE

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A DISCOURSE

PREACHED

December 15th 1774.

BEING THE DAY RECOMMENDED

By the Provincial Congreſs;

And *Afterwards at the* BOSTON LECTURE.

BY

WILLIAM GORDON,

PASTOR OF THE THIRD CHURCH IN ROXBURY.

"And the King conſulted with the old men that ſtood before his father, while he yet lived, and ſaid, how do ye adviſe, that I may anſwer this people? And they ſpake unto him, ſaying, if thou wilt be a ſervant unto this people this day, and wilt ſerve them, and anſwer them, and ſpeak good words to them, *then* they will be thy ſervants for ever." 1 Kings. 12. 6, 7.

"I ardently wiſh that the common enemies to both countries may ſee to their diſappointment, that theſe diſputes between the Mother country, and the colonies have terminated like the quarrels of lovers, and increaſed the affection which they ought to bear to each other."

Governor *Gage's* Letter to the Hon. *Peyton Randolph*, Eſq;

BOSTON: Printed for, and Sold by THOMAS LEVERETT, in *Corn-Hill*, 1775.

DISCOURSE

A DISCOURSE

FROM

Lam. III. 22.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not.

THE pulpit is devoted, in general, to more important purpoſes, than the fate of kingdoms, or the civil rights of human nature; being intended, to recover men from the ſlavery of ſin and ſatan—to point out their eſcape from future miſery, through faith in a crucified Jeſus—and to aſſiſt them in their preparations for an eternal bleſſedneſs: But ſtill, there are ſpecial times and ſeaſons when it may treat of politics. And ſurely, if it is allowable for ſome who occupy it, by preaching up the doctrines of non-reſiſtance and paſſive obedience, to vilify the principles, and to ſap the foundations of that glorious revolution, that exalted the houſe of *Hanover* to the *Britiſh* throne; it ought to be no tranſgreſſion in others, nor be conſtrued into a want of loyalty, to ſpeak conſiſtently with thoſe approved tenets, that have made GEORGE the third, the firſt of *European* ſovereigns, who otherwiſe, with all his perſonal virtues, might have lived an obſcure Elector.

Having

Having then, the paſt morning of this provincial thankſgiving, accommodated the text to the caſe of individuals, I ſhall now dedicate it, according to its original intention, to the ſervice of the public, the ſituation of whoſe affairs, is, both *diſtreſſing* and *alarming*.

THE capital of the colony is barbarouſly treated, pretendedly for a crime, but actually, for the noble ſtand ſhe has made in favour of liberty, againſt the partiſans of ſlavery. She has diſtinguiſhed herſelf by an animated oppoſition to arbitrary and unconſtitutional proceedings; and therefore has been markt out, by miniſterial vengeance, to be made an example of, whereby to terrify other *American* cities into a tame ſubmiſſion. She is an example—and, thanks to heaven! an example of patience and fortitude, to the no ſmall mortification of her enemies, whoſe own baſe feelings led them to imagine, that ſhe would immediately become an abject ſupplicant for royal favour, tho' at the expence of natural and charter'd rights. May ſome future hiſtorian, the friend of mankind and citizen of the world, have to record in his faithful and ever-living page, that ſhe never truckled, though *Britiſh* ſailors and ſoldiers, contrary to their natural affection for the cauſe of liberty, were baſely employed to intimidate her; but perſeveringly held out, through the fiery trial, 'till a revolution of men and meaſures brought on her deliverance!

But it is not the capital alone that ſuffers. The late venal Parliament, in compliance with the directions of adminiſtration, have, under the falſe colour of regulating the government of the colony, mutilated its charter, and conveyed dange-

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rous powers to individuals, for the enforcing and maintaining thoſe encroachments, that they have ventured, in defiance of common equity, to make upon the rights of a free people.—And had not the calmneſs and prudence of others ſupplied their lack of wiſdom, the country might by this time have become an *Aceldama*. *

the principles, which the Britiſh legiſla- have adopted in their late extraordinary ceedings, I ſee not, how we can be certain of one privilege—nor what hinders our being cally in a ſtate of ſlavery to an aggregate of maſters, whoſe tyranny may be worſe than that of a ſingle deſpot—nor that a man can with propriety ſay, *his ſoul's his own*, and not the ſpring to move his bodily machine, in the performance of whatever drudgery his lords may appoint—nor that the public have a permanent and valuable conſtitution. If the Britiſh legiſlature is the conſtitution, or ſuperior to the conſtitution, *Magna Charta, the bill of rights, and the proteſtant ſucceſſion*, theſe boaſts of Britons, are toys to pleaſe the vulgar, and not *ſolid ſecurities*.

THE operation of the late unconſtitutional acts of the Britiſh Parliament, would not only deprive

* I take this opportunity of making my public acknowledgments to his Excellency the Governor, for not having precipitated the country into a civil war—an event, which as appears by his letter, he ardently wiſhes may never exiſt. Should the continent be exerciſed with ſo great an evil, I promiſe myſelf from the known humanity, the conſtant attendant of true bravery—the known humanity of the Britiſh officers and troops, that they will not add barbarity to the unavoidable calamities of war: But ſhould any helliſh policy order it's being done, the colonies, 'tis to be ſuppoſed, will dread all leſs than ſlavery to thoſe cruel maſters that can iſſue ſuch ſavage edicts.

prive the colony of invaluable privileges, but introduce a train of evils, little expected by the generality, and give the Britiſh miniſtry ſuch an aſcendency in all public affairs, as would be to the laſt dangerous. *

* In ſupport of this paragraph, I ſhall quote the following paſſages, from the proteſt of the Lords againſt the regulating Act, *viz.*

" The new conſtitution of judicature provided by this bill is
" improper, and incongruous with the plan of the adminiſtra-
" tion of juſtice in Great Britain.

" The Governor and Council thus inſtituted with powers,
" with which the Britiſh conſtitution has not truſted his Ma-
" jeſty and his Privy-Council, have the means of returning
" ſuch a jury in each particular cauſe, as may beſt ſuit with the
" gratification of their paſſions, and intereſts. The lives,
" liberties and properties of the ſubject are put into
" their hands without controul; and the invaluable right of
" trial by jury, is turned into a *ſnare* for the people, who
" have hitherto looked upon it as their main ſecurity a-
" gainſt the licentiouſneſs of power.

" We ſee in this bill the ſame ſcheme of ſtrengthening the au-
" thority of the officers and miniſters of ſtate, *at the expence*
" *of the rights and liberties of the ſubject*, which was indicated
" by the inauſpicious act for ſhutting up the harbour of Boſ-
" ton.

" By that act which is immediately connected with this bill,
" the example was ſet of a large important city (contain-
" ing vaſt multitudes of people, many of whom muſt be in-
" nocent and all of whom are unheard) by an arbitrary ſen-
" tence deprived of the advantage of that port, upon which
" all their means of livelihood did immediately depend.

" *This proſcription* is not made determinable on the payment
" of a fine for an offence, or a compenſation for an injury;
" but is to continue until the miniſters of the Crown ſhall
" think fit to adviſe the King in Council to revoke it.

" The legal condition of the ſubject (ſtanding unattainted by
" conviction, for treaſon or felony) ought never to depend
" upon the arbitrary will of any perſon whatſoever.

I would add alſo. The clauſe in the regulating act, reſpecting town meetings, leaves it in the power of a Governor, to prevent them all at pleaſure, thoſe only excepted for the choice of

THE ſpirited behaviour of the country under theſe innovations, has charm'd, and affrighted, numbers: And, ſhould it be continued, with prudence unremitted zeal and true fortitude, will produce monuments of praiſe more laſting than braſs; even though it ſhould not prove ſucceſsful, which is ſcarce ſuppoſable.

of town officers in March, and for the choice of Repreſentatives. Neither the moſt trifling, nor the moſt important buſineſs can be legally tranſacted, ſo as to be binding upon the inhabitants, even in the moſt diſtant towns of the government, *without leave firſt had and obtained of the Governor in writing, expreſſing ſuch ſpecial buſineſs*, though it ſhould happen that if not done, within leſs time than neceſſary for the obtaining of that leave, it cannot be done at all. The town's-men can neither lay out a new road, nor raiſe monies for mending an old one; nor can they ſettle a miniſter, without obtaining the expreſs written leave of the Governor. Yea, they are forbid ſo much as to talk, for they are not to *treat*, of any *other matter* at their March meeting, *except the election of their officers, nor at any other meeting, except the buſineſs expreſſed in the leave given by the Governor, or in his abſence by the Lieutenant Governor.* If this is not to eſtabliſh ſlavery by legiſlative authority, I beg to know what is? The arbitrary mandates of the Grand Monarch enjoining his ſlaves ſilence, when ſtate affairs are diſagreeable to the public, will ſcarce be thought by many, ſo great an attack upon the rights of mankind, as an attempt to perpetuate ſomething of the like nature by a permanent law. Should the favourite of a Governor have embezzled the towns-money, how ſhall a meeting be obtained to vote and order a proſecution againſt him? Should a candidate be reported as a warm friend to the liberties of the people, how ſhall leave be had for his being ſettled, though unanimouſly approved of, and admired? Should an oppreſſed town be deſirous of ſtating it's grievances, and praying a redreſs, how ſhall the inhabitants do it in a corporate capacity, ſhould the Commander in chief be prejudiced againſt them? Should the electors be inclined to inſtruct their repreſentatives upon matters of the higheſt concern to them, how ſhall they do it without violating the law, when

THE *diſtreſſes* that the late acts have already occaſioned, are many and great; and too well known to require an enumeration: And yet, could we be ſecure of a ſpeedy relief, in the permanent redreſs of our grievances, we ſhould ſoon forget them. But we have our fears, leſt they ſhould be only the beginning of ſorrows; and are in doubt, whether we may not be called to experience the horrors of a civil war; unleſs we will diſgrace our deſcent, meanly ſubmit to the loſs of our privileges, and leave to poſterity—the many millions that ſhall people this continent, in leſs than a century—*bonds* and *fetters*.

The

the Ruler's intereſt prevents his giving them leave? A thouſand other events are made to depend upon the *arbitrary* will of a Governor, by the clauſe before us. And why are all the towns of the colony to be reduced to ſuch a ſlaviſh dependance? Becauſe, as the Britiſh legiſlative aſſerts, "a great abuſe has been made of calling town meetings, "and the inhabitants have, contrary to the deſign of their "inſtitution, been *miſled* to treat upon matters of the moſt "general concern, and to paſs many dangerous and un-"warrantable reſolves." O! abominable! That a people ſhould be deprived of their precious and long enjoyed liberties, not for any wilfully perverſe known crime, but becauſe of their being fooliſhly *miſled*. Why did not the *wiſe* miniſtry eaſe themſelves of the oppoſition given them by the city of *London*, by a like regulation of their charter, upon the ground of the citizens having been *miſled*? Why do they not, upon the ſame ground, prevent all corporation and county meetings in *Great-Britain*, that ſo they may not be peſter'd with any future petitions or remonſtrances? But, ſhould the operation of the regulating act be ſecured, who can tell, how long it will be, ere the Britiſh legiſlative will aſſign the *ſolid* reaſon of *having been miſled to treat upon matters of the moſt general concern, and to paſs many dangerous and unwarrantable reſolves*, for ſuſpending all the American aſſemblies, or at leaſt for reducing the members of each, to the more convenient number of the *Yorkers*!

I decline as wholly unneceſſary, all remarks upon the miſ-called act for the *impartial* adminiſtration of juſtice &c.

The important day is now arrived, that muſt determine whether we ſhall *remain* free; or, alas! be brought into bondage, after having long enjoyed the ſweets of liberty. The event will probably be ſuch as is our own conduct. Will we conform to the once exploded, but again courtly, doctrines of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance, rather than hazard life and property, we may have the honour of burning under the heats of ſummer, and freezing under the colds of winter, in providing for the luxurious entertainment of lazy, proud, worthleſs *penſioners* and *placemen*. *

WILL

* There are *ſome* honourable exceptions to this general intimation; but they are ſo *few* that they can ſave *themſelves only* and not the *liſt* from deſerved reproach.

In the year 1697, the penſions amounted only to ſeven thouſand and ſeventy ſeven pounds ſterling; but in the year 1705, they amounted to eighteen thouſand one hundred and eleven pounds. Since then they have increaſed to a moſt enormous ſum. A late publication informs us, that, about ten years back, there was a million of debt contracted on the 6d per pound tax laid on penſions. The intereſt of a million at 4l. per cent, being forty thouſand pounds per annum, the penſions, to have anſwered for it, muſt have amounted to one million ſix hundred thouſand pounds per annum; if at 3l. per cent to one million two hundred thouſand. There might poſſibly have been a deficiency in this fund, but it cannot be thought that the financier would have propoſed it, had it been very conſiderably deficient.

I heartily wiſh that ſome, who have leiſure, and can procure the neceſſary materials, would inform the public, as near as poſſible, what ſums are exhauſted by places and penſions. As to the numerous expenditures in the ſecret ſervices of rewards, bribery and corruption, jobs and contracts, they muſt remain among the *arcana imperii*. But was a virtuous patriotic adminiſtration to cloſe all thoſe unneceſſary drains, whereby the wealth of *Great-Britain* is carried off, they would in a few years of peace, greatly reduce the national debt, and have no temptation to gull the people, under a pretence of eaſing them by American taxes, when they deſign only to provide for their numerous dependants, and to increaſe the power of the crown, alias the miniſtry.

WILL we make our appeal to heaven againſt the intended oppreſſion; venture all, upon the noble principles that brought the houſe of *Hanover*, into the poſſeſſion of the *Britiſh* diadem; and not fear to bleed freely in the cauſe, not of a particular people, but of mankind in general; we ſhall be likely to tranſmit to future generations, though the country ſhould be waſted by the ſword, the moſt eſſential part of the fair patrimony received from our brave and hardy progenitors, the right of poſſeſſing, and of diſpoſing of, at our own option, the honeſt fruits of our induſtry. However, it's *alarming* to think, that, through the miſtaken policy of *Great-Britain*, and the abſurd notion of perſiſting in wrong meaſures for the honour of government, we may be obliged to paſs through thoſe difficulties, and to behold thoſe ſcenes, and engage in thoſe ſervices that are ſhocking to humanity, and would be intolerable, but for the hope of preſerving and perpetuating our liberties. Our trade ruin'd, our plantations trodden down, our cattle ſlain or taken away, our property plundered, our dwellings in flames, our families inſulted and abuſed, our friends and relatives wallowing, and our own garments rolled, in blood, are calamities that we are not accuſtomed to, and that we cannot realize but with the utmoſt pain: And yet we muſt expect more or leſs of theſe, ſhould we be compelled to betake ourſelves to the ſword in behalf of our rights. 'Tis not a little grievous to be alarmed with the apprehenſion of ſuch ſevere trials, unleſs we will in our conduct reſemble thoſe ſimple ones, that for the ſake of indulging themſelves in preſent eaſe

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and plenty, barter away their whole intereſt in future happineſs. *

But though the ſituation of public affairs is both *diſtreſſing* and *alarming*; it is by far better than we have deſerved, from the Sovereign of the univerſe. It would have been much worſe had we been dealt with according to our demerits. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not.* Some may at firſt hearing object againſt this, as being too ſtrong an expreſſion, and may think, conſidering the morals of the people when compared with the inhabitants of other places, that it is miſ-applied. I am ready to allow, that the morals of this people, taken collectively, are ſuperior to thoſe of other places (Connecticut excepted, where I ſuppoſe they are nearly the ſame) whether in the new or the old world, all things conſidered; and I cannot but view, as a ſtrong proof hereof, the order that prevails through the country, now that the execution of the laws, becauſe of the peculiarity of the times, is ſuſpended. And yet after all, I muſt hold to the text; and, that we may be fully convinced, and be duely affected with the truth of it, ſhall make ſome remarks upon this people, conſidered as the ſubjects of God's moral government.

I. In

* It may be objected, that the points in diſpute are too trifling to juſtify the hazard of ſuch ſevere trials. It will be anſwered, that 'tis the *principles* the continent is oppoſing, in it's attempts to prevent the eſtabliſhment of precedents. The real diſpute is, whether the long enjoyed conſtitution of theſe American colonies, when they are not conſenting to it, ſhall be liable to every alteration, that a legiſlative, three thouſand miles off, ſhall think convenient and profitable to themſelves—and whether a houſe of commons at that diſtance, to which they neither do, nor can ſend a ſingle repreſentative, ſhall diſpoſe of their property at pleaſure. *Obſta Principiis.*

1. In the firſt place I remark, that the prevalency of any vices and immoralities among this people, muſt be peculiarly provoking.

Circumſtances aggravate or alleviate the crimes of ſocieties, no leſs than of ſingle perſons; and far more and other is expected from ſome, than from many others in a very different ſituation and condition.

Now it ſhould be remembered, that this is is but a *young* people, not a hundred and fifty years old; for, they were not a *people* for the few firſt years of their ſettlement in this wilderneſs, no more than a ſmall company, who muſt have ſoon periſhed by the hands of the native *Indians*, had not God interpoſed. Their youth is an aggravation to the crimes committed by them. For a young perſon to be given to vice, though he has a corrupted nature the ſame as others, is highly offenſive. We look for a decent, modeſt, and orderly behaviour in *him*.

In like manner, a *young ſtate* ſhould be pure in its morals; ſhould be addicted to no particular vices; ſhould obſerve the utmoſt regularity of behaviour; and ſhould not even think of, much leſs practiſe, the crimes too generally to be met with in countries of long ſtanding, when attained to their height in power and affluence. There is an utter unfitneſs in the former's attempting to imitate the latter. Can we ſay, that this riſing young ſtate is clear as to this matter; that it has not copied the corrupt manners of it's aged parent; and that it hath not it's particular vices that are a reproach to it? However willing we may be, thro' ſelf love and native fondneſs, to apologize for it; we cannot conſcientiouſly pronounce it *not-guilty*, while we know how notorious, intemperance, uncleanneſs, luxury and irreligion are among us,

But another thing that makes the vices and immoralities of this people peculiarly provoking, is, their deſcent and education. The ſins of a youth deſcended from pious parents, who has had good examples ſet him, and who has been carefully educated, are worſe than thoſe of a common youth, that has not enjoyed ſuch advantages.

Now the anceſtors of this people were eminently godly. It was the ſtrength of their zeal for true unadulterated religion, and the ardour of their love to God and Chriſt, that prevailed upon them to venture over the great deep, and to ſeek an abode in this then inhoſpitable and dangerous country; and that reconciled them to the numberleſs difficulties, that they had long to encounter, without ever attaining to the various comforts that we enjoy. They were concern'd to perpetuate the ſame ſpirit of piety which they were actuated by; paid great attention to the riſing generation, and wiſely provided for the good inſtruction of ſucceeding ones. Wherein can we charge them with want, either of wiſdom, or faithfulneſs to poſterity? Do we not ſtill reap the fruits of their contrivance and foreſight, though not in ſo ample a manner as might be, through our own ſinfulneſs? Judge ye, what could have been done more, through their inſtrumentality, for this part of the Lord's vineyard, than what hath been done? Wherefore then, hath it brought forth ſo many wild and bad grapes, when it ſhould have yielded the choiceſt fruit? Is not this people ſtrangely degenerated, ſo as to poſſeſs but a faint reſemblance of that godlineſs, for which their forefathers were eminent! And, could theſe laſt appear

appear for a while, again in this colony, with the common paſſions and ſentiments of human nature, would they not ſtand amazed at the ſinfulneſs of the preſent generation, and be ready to diſown them for their poſterity! Is it not another generation of profeſſors, very different both as to ſentiments and practice, from that which by their emigrations for conſcience ſake, firſt planted the goſpel in New-England; would not the like zeal for the leading doctrines of chriſtianity, and the like ſtrictneſs in morals, that prevailed in the firſt ſettlers, be ſeverely cenſured and be ſtigmatized by ſome reproachful epithet, as in their day, by the generality among us, though through the ſpirit of the times, the perſecution might not be more than that of the tongue. They that will diveſt themſelves of prejudice, and judge impartially, will be obliged, I apprehend, to acknowledge that this people do not anſwer to the honourableneſs of their deſcent; any more than to the care that was taken by their predeceſſors, for their being well-educated in the principles and practices of religion; the *full* benefit of which care, though they may not enjoy, through the cenſurable faultineſs of ſome in neglecting their duty, yet is ſo far enjoyed, as that people in general, including all ranks, are not better inſtructed and educated any where, it is probable, than in this country. But certainly the more honourable their religious deſcent, and the better their education, the more provoking muſt their vices and immoralities be; and nothing can be more worthy of their particular conſideration, eſpecially in theſe threatning times, than thoſe words in the 3d of *Amos* 2d. wherein the Lord addreſſes the children of Iſrael ſaying, *You only have I known of all the*

be families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. I might add more particulars to this firſt remark, but chuſe to make them diſtinct ones of themſelves.

2. I therefore proceed to mention in the ſecond place, that the obligations this people are under to holineſs, are ſpecial, from the many appearances of God in their favour, and his having ſo multiplied and exalted them.

How oft has the ſupreme Governor of the univerſe wonderfully, next to miraculouſly, interpoſed for their deliverance, when in the utmoſt danger! Their enemies expected to ſwallow them up, and were upon the point of doing it, when providence hath critically interpoſed, ſo that they have eſcaped, like a bird out of a ſnare that has been thrown over it. When their eagerneſs to co-operate with the parent ſtate, reducing the power of the common enemy, led them into a bold and dangerous enterprize, in which if they had miſcarried they would have been ſubject to an almoſt irreparable damage, and which muſt have miſcarried according to the uſual courſe of human and military affairs, had not ſpecial events, carrying in them the evident marks of providential appointment, though in the account of the unbeliever purely caſual—I ſay, which muſt have miſcarried, had not ſpecial events turned it, it pleaſed God to order the exiſtence of them, and, by crowning the expedition with ſucceſs, not only to avert the train of evils that muſt otherwiſe have followed, but to give this people, then proceed in their infancy, a NAME among the warlike veteran ſtates of *Europe*, and to ſhew the world, what a few raw provincials could do, under the ſmiles and care of heaven, againſt fortifications and batteries really ſtrong, and defended

by regulars, though not by Britons. May they never loſe *that* NAME, nor blaſt the laurels gained at *Louiſbourg*, by any future cowardly conduct, when it is not conqueſt, but liberty and property that are at ſtake!

GOD hath not only appeared for this people, but hath greatly multiplied and exalted them. They were at firſt a few men in number, yea, very few and ſtrangers in the land. They came from a well cultivated kingdom to a ſavage people and a wild country, enough to diſcourage the ſtouteſt. However they ventured to take up their abode in it, and, through the original bleſſing of heaven upon them, which perhaps never diſplayed itſelf and wrought more effectually, except in the inſtance of the Jews, they are become a conſiderable nation, poſſeſs a tolerable ſhare of wealth and would enjoy much public happineſs, were the painful diſputes between them and the parent country comfortably terminated. The face of the colony is not leſs changed for the better ſince firſt ſettled, than what is ſet forth in the language of Iſaiah's prophecy, *the wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhall be glad; the deſert ſhall rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe. It ſhall bloſſom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and ſinging, the glory of Lebanon ſhall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They ſhall ſee the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* Iſa. 35. 1, 2. Theſe enumerated, are *ſpecial* obligations on this people to holineſs. But does their holineſs correſpond with them? Are the fruits yielded by them ſuited to ſuch benefits? Are they that manner of people that might have been expected; and that they engaged to be when under difficulties, and in great perplexity through threatning appearances? Have

have they not, like the Jews of old, after ſinging the divine praiſes, forgot the works of God, and the wonders he hath ſhowed them? And hath not the caſt of their after-conduct evidenced, that, in renewing their engagements with him in the day of their affliction, *they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues; and that their heart was not right with him*; for, *they have not been ſtedfaſt in his covenant*, have not walked agreeable to the deſign and purport of God's covenant of grace, with which they have in much mercy, been made acquainted.

3. I ſhall now remark in the third and laſt place, that though the appearances of religion among this people, are great and many, yet it is to be feared, that real religion is ſcarce, that the power of godlineſs is rare, and that while there is much outward ſhow of reſpect to the Deity there is but little inward heart conformity to him.

Individuals are juſtly entitled to the benefit of an exception, notwithſtanding which it may be applied with too much truth to the community as a body, *this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Math. 15. 8. What is religion with the generality, more than being baptized, attending public worſhip ſtatedly on the Lord's day, owning the covenant, coming to the Lord's table, and then being orderly in the outward deportment! If, beſides all now mentioned, there is a ſtrict attendance upon private prayer, and the further addition of family, though the prayers ſhall conſiſt of nothing more than the repeating of a certain ſet of words that the tongue has been habituated to, the goodneſs of ſuch religion muſt not be queſtioned; though not proceeding from a work

work of regeneration—not produced originally by any ſpecial influences of the holy Spirit—not accompanied, with any ſaving illuminations from above, with any ſpiritual view of the divine glories, any true hatred to ſin, any ſenſe of the beauty of holineſs, any ſoul-ſanctifying love to God and the Lord Jeſus. Is there not a great, though unhappy affinity, between the caſe of this people religiouſly conſidered, and that of the *Laodicean* church, as deſcribed by the Alpha and Omega in Rev. 3. 15-18.

THE above remarks upon this people, conſidered as the ſubjects of God's moral government, being duely weighed, ſhall we not be brought to own with humility and gratitude, that *it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſion fail not.* As yet we are not conſumed.

Though, when we look down from the adjoining hills, and behold the capital, we cannot but lament ſaying, "How is the gold become dim! "how is the moſt fine gold changed! how does "her port mourn, becauſe her ſhipping come not "to her as formerly: all her wharfs are deſolate! "how is ſhe poſſeſſed and ſurrrounded by an ar"med force, as though in the hands of an ene"my! Yet, bleſſed be God! ſhe doth not ſit ſoli"tary; ſhe is full of people: ſhe is honourable "among the nations: ſhe is as a princeſs among "the provinces, ſeeing that ſhe hath not meanly "become tributary. She weepeth ſore in the "night, and her tears are on her cheeks: but, "like beauty in diſtreſs, ſhe is the more engaging. "She hath many lovers to comfort her; and her "friends have not dealt treacherouſly with her, "ſo far from having become her enemies. Her "inhabitants are ſuffering, but not ſtarving. Her

"prieſts

" prieſts and her elders have not given up the
" ghoſt, while ſeeking meat to relieve their ſoul.
" The tongue of the ſucking child cleaveth not
" to the roof of his mouth for thirſt. The young
" children aſk not bread, without any man's of-
" fering to break it unto them. We ſee not her
" dwellings and public buildings, both civil and
" ſacred, in flames; and the whole becoming, by
" a ſpeedy deſtruction, an horrid heap of ruins."

Though, when we ſurvey the country, we be-
moan the attempts that have been made upon the
ancient foundations of its civil government, which
if ſucceſsful, will in all probability, after a time,
undermine and deſtroy it's religious liberties; yet
we are thankful, that no dwelling has been de-
ſtroyed—that none of any party, have as yet pe-
riſhed, by the ſhocks they have occaſioned in the
ſtate—that the ſword hath not been commiſſioned
by heaven to deſtroy, and the way to an accommo-
dation been rendered ſtill more inacceſſible, thro'
the ſhedding of blood. We adore the goodneſs
of God, which has kept us from being conſumed
by the ravages of war. *It is of the Lord's mercies
that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail
not.* And much more ſo, that, in the diſtreſſing
and alarming ſituation of our public affairs, there
have been ſo many favourable circumſtances to
preſerve us from fainting, to hearten us up, and
to encourage our hopes, in expecting that we ſhall
at length, in the exerciſe of *prudence, fortitude, and
piety*, get well through our difficulties.

HERE allow me to run through a brief ſumma-
ry of theſe favourable circumſtances, compoſed
of the following particulars—The riſing and
growing conſiſtency of ſentiments in the friends
of liberty, which hath led one aſſembly and ano-

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ther on this continent, to attempt preventing the further introduction of ſlaves among them, tho' herein they have been counter-acted by governors, and which the American Congreſs hath with ſo much wiſdom and juſtice adopted—The increaſing acquaintance with the rights of conſcience in matters of religion, as belonging equally alike to men of all parties and denominations, while they conduct as good members of civil ſociety, without endeavouring to injure their neighbours of different or oppoſite ſentiments—The blundering policy of the Britiſh miniſtry, in giving ſo cruel a caſt to the Boſton Port-bill, taking away by it private property and ſubjecting it's reſtitution to the pleaſure of the Sovereign; in following that ſo haſtily with other acts, equally unjuſt and more extenſively pernicious, affecting the whole colony, and built upon principles and claims, that rendered every dwelling plantation and right through the Continent precarious, dependent on the will of the parliament, or rather of the junto or individual, that hath the power of managing it; in declaring openly while ſupporting the bills, that their deſign was not againſt a ſingle town or colony, but againſt all America; in preſuming, that the other towns and colonies, upon receiving the dreadful news, would turn pale and tremble, conceal their ſpirit of reſentment and oppoſition, in ſneaking profeſſions of tame ſubmiſſion and abandon the diſtreſſed, though their own ruin muſt have followed upon it, however ſlowly; and, upon ſuch preſumption, neglecting to divide in time, the different colonies, by flattering promiſes ſuited to their ſeveral ſituations, and by ſecret purchaſes ere they could form a general union—The re-eſtabliſhment of arbitrary power and a deſpotic government, in a moſt extenſive and purpoſely

large

larged country, contrary to the royal declaration given a few years before, qualified somewhat to the inhabitants, by that formal security of their religious liberty, which was no ways wanting; but as is generally, I fear justly, thought, with the base diabolical design of procuring their assistance, if required, in quelling the spirit of freedom among the *natural* and loyal subjects of *Great-Britain*— *

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* I have no objection to the *Canadians* being fully secured in the enjoyment of their religion, however erroneous and anti-christian it may appear to me, as a protestant: But to the British legislative's not having given an *universal establishment* to the rights of conscience among them. The *rights of conscience* are too sacred for any civil power on earth to interdict, wherein they produce not *overt* acts against the necessary and essential rights of civil society—I say, *necessary* and *essential*, to guard against the reasonings of interested designing priests of every denomination, who are for forming unnatural alliances between church and state, the sword of the Spirit and the sword of the magistrate. Arguments drawn from the ancient Jewish Theocracy, are of no avail, 'till the existence of a *christian Theocracy* is proved, in direct opposition to the words of our great Leader, who hath said *My kingdom is not of this world.*

Should the necessity of our affairs convene another Congress, hope among other things, it will be agreed upon, as the proper solid basis for the firmest and most extensive union, that every colony should retain, while the majority of it are so pleased, whatever is it's prevailing form of religion, and admit of an universal toleration, to all other persuasions, whether professors of christianity or not.

'Twas a special pleasure to me, on my first arrival in America among the friendly Philadelphians, to observe how Papists, Episcopalians, Moravians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists and Quakers, could pass each other peaceably, and in good temper, on the sabbath, after having broke up their respective assemblies—which I could not but take notice of, in an early letter to my native country.

It may be said, that notwithstanding this apparent regard for the rights of conscience, I am really unfriendly to them, unless I will admit of an American episcopate. Though some may be prejudiced against it, from the ribbing, rancarous

—The ſpeedy arrival of the Port-bill in the common way of conveyance, whereby ſome difficulties were avoided and ſome advantages enjoyed, while adminiſtration was not ſo merciful, as to attempt giving us the earlieſt intelligence of what had been done—It's arrival at *Boſton*, *New-York* and *Virginia*, nearly

rous and abuſive oppoſition that certain D. D's are continually making to meaſures for preſerving the civil rights of this continent, (whoſe conduct I can eaſily account for, and who have doubtleſs received intelligence, as well as myſelf, that *the deſign of ſending a Biſhop to America, as ſoon as circumſtances will admit, is certainly kept in view*; and that — — — — — — *is intended for the ſee*: And men, whoſe ambitious hopes of a deanery, arch-deaconſhip, or croſier, are likely to be diſappointed by the public manoeuvres in favour of liberty, will be out of humour, and ſhould be patiently born with, though they vent their ſpleen againſt liberty itſelf.) Yet, the rights of epiſcopalians are not thereby forfeited: and whenever the majority of them, laity included, (and not a few of the leading clergy, who are for more homage than the preſent equality admits) are deſirous of an American epiſcopate, and will ſee to it's being with ſecurity, that the Biſhop and every other dignitary, ſhall be confined purely to ſpiritual matters—ſhall have no more rule in civil concerns, than the parochial prieſt—ſhall be maintained by no kind of tax, but by voluntary contributions, or from legacies given a full year before the death of the teſtator, when coming out of a real eſtate—and ſhall be deprived of all power to injure or interrupt other denominations, let them be gratified. It will have a good effect, and will prevent our young men's making a trip to *England* for orders, which generally proves dangerous—to their love of freedom. But it will be long enough, ere ſome who have been arduouſly labouring to accompliſh a proteſtant American epiſcopate, will, with all their conſcientious attachment to, and zeal for it, agree to it's exiſtence in this new world upon ſuch equitable conditions; as may be inferred, from the little attention paid to what L--d S--g mentioned to them, at or in the neighbourhood of *Amboy*.

As to the *civil* eſtabliſhment given to the Canadians by the *Quebec* bill, the ſlavery of it has been admirably expoſed in the addreſs of the Congreſs; and yet, was it a fact, that the body of

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nearly at the ſame time—The firmneſs that the Boſtonians ſhowed upon the occaſion—The indignation with which it was received, as the news flew through the continent—The ſpirited behaviour of the noble Virginian Aſſembly, * whereby they haſtened their own diſſolution—The accounts from different places and colonies, forwarded to the capital for her encouragement under her diſtreſs, and to aſſure her of aſſiſtance and ſupport, and that they conſidered her's in the true light of a common cauſe; not in conſequence of, but ere they had received, her applications for advice and direction, with the ſtate of her ſituation—The forwardneſs, which ſhowed itſelf every where, to contribute to her relief, and to adopt meaſures that might, in the iſſue, recover and ſecure the

the French inhabitants preferred it to every other form, I am of Lord Littleton's opinion, that they ſhould have it while they requeſted it; we have reaſon however to believe, that the mode of trial by juries was deſired by the bulk of the people, and that it was taken away to gratify the *petty nobleſſe* of the country, who were for enjoying, as when under *France*, the power of oppreſſing their inferiors. But ſurely care ought to have been taken by proviſos in the act, that Britons ſhould not have been ſhut out from ſettling in a country, for the conqueſt of which they did and do contribute, without giving up their liberties and commencing ſlaves: And that a *Britiſh* Gentleman, was he pleaſed to make the tour of *Canada*, might not be expoſed to an impriſonment by a letter de cacher from a Governor, in conſequence of ſecret inſtructions from home, ſhould he have unhappily fallen under the high diſpleaſure of a Britiſh miniſtry.

Many political miniſterial writers have, with a malicious cunning, attributed to the *Maſſachuſetts* more merit in oppoſing the attempts againſt American rights, than it's entitled to. The epiſcopal colony of *Virginia* bravely led in the movements at the time of the Stamp-Act; and was the firſt, that, by their aſſembly, declared againſt the *Boſton* Port-bill, in the ſtrongeſt terms of an honeſt indignation.

liberties of this and the other colonies—The ſurpriſing agreement in opinion, that has prevailed in perſons at a great diſtance from each other, while conſulting for the general good, whereby they have been led to tranſmit by letters, nearly the ſame propoſals to each other, as though the inſpiration of the Moſt High gave them the like underſtanding—The fixing upon a general Congreſs, and chuſing delegates, altho' in ſeveral places, governmental chicanery was uſed to prevent it—The tender compaſſionate feelings that every delegate of whatſoever denomination, without regard to party diſtinctions, diſcovered for the Boſtonians, under the free and affecting prayer of a worthy epiſcopalian*, when at the opening of the congreſs they had been alarmed with the falſe rumour that *Boſton* had been attacked by the military and navy—The amazing conſequences that this falſe alarm did, and continues to, produce. It proved the means of ſhowing that the coloniſts were not to be intimidated, though martial appearances were to terminate in actual hoſtilities; that they would be volunteers in the cauſe of liberty; and that they meant not to avoid fighting, whenever it became neceſſary. It put many thouſands upon boldly betaking themſelves to arms, and marching forward, as they apprehended, to the aſſiſtance of their oppreſſed fellow ſubjects. It kindled a martial ſpirit, that has ſpread through various colonies, and put the inhabitants upon perfecting themſelves in the military exerciſe, that ſo they may be early prepared for the worſt. To that it has been owing, in a great meaſure, that the continent has put on ſuch a warlike appearance; that companies have been formed, and are continually

* The Rev. Mr. Duché.

continually training, as far down as to, and even in *Virginia*, if not further * ; and that they will be better prepared, than was ever before the caſe, to repel all invaſions, that may be made upon their natural and conſtitutional rights, even tho' ſupported by a Britiſh army. Should Britiſh officers and troops, wrongly imagine, that their commiſſions and oaths oblige them to act, tho' in oppoſition to thoſe very principles of the conſtitution that ſupports them, and empowers the King to give them their commiſſions, inſtead of recollecting, that all obligations entred into, muſt neceſſarily be attended with this proviſo, that they are not contrary to and ſubverſive of the conſtitution, and that it is a reverence for, and love to the conſtitution that diſtinguiſhes the *ſoldier* from the *mercenary*: Still, they would have no inclination to fight with fellow ſubjects, whoſe only fault was an exceſſive love of freedom, and a fixed determination not to ſubmit, to what they really believed, were deſigned attacks upon their moſt precious liberties. In ſuch circumſtances, may we not hope, that the former would rather wiſh to eſcape with honour, than to diſgrace themſelves with conqueſt, and that *the men of might would not find their hands*. But ſhould it be otherwiſe, and their native bravery be ſacrificed in ſupport of a bad cauſe; yet it might be too hard a taſk for them to ſubdue their brethren, when fighting *pro aris et focis*, for all that is dear; and who almoſt univerſally excel in the art of ſtriking a mark, by which the waſte of ammunition

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* We are informed of the like in *South Carolina*.

nition will be greatly prevented *, the want of field artillery will not be much, nor long felt, under a commander that has ſkill to avoid being attacked, and to chuſe his ground for attacking, in a country with which he is perfectly acquainted, and where every inhabitant, even the children, are ſtanding ſpies upon all the motions of an adverſary. But as I earneſtly beg of heaven, that the redreſs of our grievances may be obtained without fighting; I ſhall not dwell longer upon this point, and proceed to mention thoſe other favourable circumſtances of a pacifick kind, that remain to be ſpecified; ſuch as, the generous donations made for the poor of Boſton, the union of the colonies, the prevailing harmony and unanimity among the individuals compoſing the Grand Congreſs, their approbation of the oppoſition giving by this colony to the acts for altering it's ancient forms of government, their aſſociation reſpecting trade and the like †, the readineſs of the people to conform to it, and the intrepid

* Mr. *Knoch*, Lieutenant in the firſt regiment of *Orange-Naſſau* in a treatiſe on "the inſufficiency of fire-arms, for attack "or defence demonſtrated from facts, &c." wrote in about 1750, proves "that, at a medium taken from any number "of battles fought ſomewhat before that period, not more "than one man could have been killed or wounded, by "eighty ſhot diſcharged".

† The right of an embodied people, in a conteſt for liberty, when the voice of the majority has been fairly obtained, to interdict, and where neceſſary, forcibly to prevent, a trade, that would ruin the common cauſe, and cannot be carried on without ſubjecting them to ſlavery, notwithſtanding the great injury it may occaſion to individuals, I apprehend, will, on the ſame principles that juſtify a proſcribing a traffic that would hazard the introduction of the peſtilence, admit of as much ſtronger a vindication, as ſlavery is the greater plague.

intrepid conduct of the ſouthern inhabitants in preventing the introduction of any more teas among them—Theſe are favourable circumſtances, beyond what the moſt ſanguine friends of liberty expected; that appear to be of the Lord's doing, and are marvellous in our eyes; that, if foretold, would have been deemed morally impoſſible, by thoſe who are ſtill inimical to them, though evidencing a wonderful interpoſition of providence; and that may juſtly *encourage* us, as well as keep us from fainting; eſpecially when taken in connection with that ſpirit of prayer and humiliation, which has diſcovered itſelf in different places on occaſion of the times. Would to God, there was more of this! Did it abound univerſally, we ſhould have greater ground of encouragement by much; for the fervent prayers of the humble, penitent, and returning, avail with GOD, thro' the mediation of the Lord Jeſus. However, from what there is, and the other favourable circumſtances we are warranted to expect, that at length, in the exerciſe of *prudence*, *fortitude* and *piety*, we ſhall get well through our difficulties.

We muſt *prudently* fall in with the meaſures recommended by the Congreſs, that ſo we may not be reported to other colonies as diſregarders of them, whereby, firſt a jealouſy may be produced, and then a diſunion effected. We muſt promote unanimity among ourſelves, peace and good order, that we may not be repreſented as deſirous of confuſion, in hopes of making an advantage of it. We ſhould let the laws of honour and honeſty have their full weight with us, that we may fall under no reproach, for abuſing the preſent ſuſpenſion of human laws. We

ſhould

ſhould diligently provide for the worſt; and be upon our guard, that we may not be ſuddenly ſtripped of thoſe appertenances, the loſs of which will be ſeverely felt, ſhould we be called upon by a dire neceſſity to make our appeal to heaven.

I have been ready at times to infer, from that military ſpirit that hath ſpread through the continent, that though we are to be ſaved, it is not to be without the ſword, or at leaſt the ſtrong appearance of it; unleſs infinite wiſdom (which we ſhall heartily rejoice to find is the caſe) ſhould be in this way preparing the colonies, for co-operating with the parent ſtate, after that matters in diſpute have been ſettled to ſatisfaction, in ſome important ſtruggle with a common enemy; and therein, by giving her effectual aſſiſtance, for wiping away the reproaches that intereſted calumny and malice have thrown upon them, and for confirming an eternal friendſhip. But is it the awful determination of heaven, that we ſhall not retain our liberties without fighting, let no one deſpair. The continent, after having diſcovered conſummate wiſdom, can never conduct ſo abſurdly, as to leave a ſingle colony alone in the diſpute; their own ſecurity will conſtrain them to ſupport whichſoever is attacked; they will rather aſſiſt at a diſtance, than have a war upon or within their own borders, and will be ſenſible that whoever fights on the ſide of American liberty, hazards *his* life in *their* battles. Should it be allowed, for argument's ſake, that ſome one province or other, through ſelfiſhneſs or timidity, ſhould baſely ſlink from the common danger; yet would the reſt have greater probability of ſucceeding than

than had the Dutch, when they began to emerge from slavery, and to acquire their liberties*. Let us be but *brave*, and we may promise ourselves success, do we join *piety* to our prudence and fortitude. Do we confess and repent of our sins, justify God in his so trying us, accept of our punishment at his hands without murmuring or complaining; Do we humble ourselves, amend our ways and doings, give up ourselves to God, become an holy people, and make the most High our confidence, we may hope that He will be on our

* "The whole country of the seven *United Provinces* is not as large as one half of *Pennsylvania*; and when they began their contest with *Philip* the second for their liberty, contained about as many inhabitants as are now in the province of *Massachusett-Bay*. *Philip's* empire then comprehended in *Europe*, all *Spain* and *Portugal*, the two *Sicilies*, and such provinces of the *Low Countries* as adhered to him—many islands of importance in the *Mediterranean*—the *Milanese* and many other valuable territories in *Italy*, and elsewhere—In *Africa* and *Asia*, all the dominions belonging to *Spain* and *Portugal*—In *America* the immense countries subject to those two kingdoms, with all their treasures, and yet unexhausted mines, and the *Spanish West-Indies*. His armies were numerous and veteran, excellently officered, and commanded by the most renowned generals. So great was their force, that during the wars in the Low Countries his commander in chief, the prince of *Parma* marched twice into *France*, and obliged that great general and glorious king, Henry the fourth, to raise at one time the siege of *Paris*, and at another that of *Rouen*. So considerable was the naval power of *Philip*, that in the midst of the same wars, he fitted out his dreadful *armada* to invade *England*. Yet seven little provinces, or counties, as we should call them, (says that eminent Pennsylvanian) inspired by one general resolution—"to die free, rather than live slaves"—not only baffled, but brought down into the dust that enormous power, that had contended for universal empire, and for half a century was the terror of the world. Such an amazing change indeed took place, that those Provinces afterward actually PROTECTED *Spain* against the power of *France*."

our ſide: And *if the Lord is for us what can man do unto us?* Have we the God of hoſts for our ally, we might bid adieu to fear, though the world was united againſt us.

Let us then be *pious*, *brave* and *prudent*, and we ſhall, ſome of us at leaſt, have room for thankſgivings, not merely for promiſing appearances, but for *actual deliverance* out of preſent difficulties, though it ſhould not be [illegible] have been converſant with the din of arms and the horrors of war. But ſhould the country be waſted for a few years, and numbers of it's inhabitants be deſtroyed, ere the wiſhed for ſalvation is granted, how ſoon, after having ſecured it's liberties, will it regain it's former proſperity; yea, become far more glorious, wealthy and populous than ever, through the thouſands and ten thouſands that will flock to it, with riches arts and ſciences acquired by them in foreign countries. And, how will the ſurviving inhabitants and their poſterity, together with refugees, who have fled from oppreſſion and hardſhips, whether civil, or ſacred, to our American ſanctuary, daily give thanks to the Sovereign of the univerſe, that *this general aſylum* was not conſumed! How oft will they, with raptures think upon that noble exertion of courage that prevented it; celebrate the praiſes of thoſe that led and ſuffered in the common cauſe; and, with glowing hearts, bleſs that God who owned the goodneſs of it, and at length crowned it with ſucceſs! Hallelujah, The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

FINIS.

THE way to eſcape an attack is to be in readineſs to receive it. While adminiſtration conſiſts of thoſe that have avowed their diſlike to the principles of this continent, and the known friends of America are excluded, there ſhould be no dependance upon the fair ſpeeches, or actual promiſes of any, but the colonies ſhould purſue the means of ſafety, as vigorouſly as ever, that they may not be *ſurprized*. 'Tis the moſt conſtant maxim of war, that a man ought never to be more upon his guard, than whilſt he is in treaty. For want of attending to it, King Edward the 4th was ſuddenly attacked, defeated, and made priſoner, by the Earl of Warwick in 1470.